'Zooming-in to local spaces offers IR a bottom-up lense’
Karolina Kluczewska looks at international development in Tajikistan as a normative and emotional enterprise over time, where on the local level, divergent visions of local order are negotiated.

‘Emotions create and limit cosmopolitan sociabilities’
Ravinder K. Sidhu draws on examples from Australia and East Asia to discuss what emotions of international students can reveal about cross border education’s contributions to public diplomacy.

‘We influence developments only through cooperation’
Anna Ahlers and Thomas Heberer review the current state of affairs in scientific cooperation between Europe and the People’s Republic of China, calling for more ‘exchange at eye-level’.

Interview with Prof. Tobias Debiel on the Peace Report 2021 from page 16
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Dear Readers,

In this Quarterly Magazine we introduce you to ongoing research at the Centre that engages with a variety of political spaces and their implications for global cooperation. While often perceived geopolitically, there are many other important dimensions that structure political spaces. Research presented in this issue engages for example with the aspirational (Biswas), emotional and normative features of political spaces (Kluczewska, Sidhu), as well as with the meaning of this concept in the digital sphere (Aguerre and Canabarro). Spanning a wide range of topics, from the Indian-American Diaspora to women’s empowerment in Post-Soviet Tajikistan and public diplomacy in the international educational sector, as well as internet governance, these contributions show how these dimensions delineate political spaces and establish hierarchies within them by providing opportunities for inclusion and exclusion.

As further highlights, this issue includes an interview with Centre Co-director Tobias Debiel on the European Union’s ability to shape global politics and a special on the challenges posed by research cooperation with China in the current political situation (Ahlers and Heberer). Furthermore, you will find presentations of three fascinating fellow projects: critical fantasy studies as a new research agenda for investigating global crisis (Mert); internet governance of network neutrality and content – learning from German experience (Sautchuk Patrício); historical reflections on world order conceptions - liberal state, private property and legal reform in the late 19th century (Török). Conference reports on ‘Re-Imagining the Past’ and the Centre’s presentations at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE) round off this issue.

We wish you a good read and a relaxing summer!

Sigrid Quack
Managing Director

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As a technology that was created in scientific environments, the original problem that the Internet attempted to solve was to seek network communications protocols that would interconnect different computer networks, initially in the United States but already by the mid 1980’s across the globe. That was the Internet of unbounded possibilities, the untamed Internet and one that gave origin to the metaphor(s) of a ‘wild digital west’.

Yet, the technical and conceptual architecture of the Internet was always conceived as cross-boundary interconnection between different networks and different computer languages, although it was not framed with those terms. The Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol enabled global network interconnection, but the notion of connectivity implied crossing an imaginary or a physical chasm – integrating what was distinct and different. The study of visible and invisible, material and immaterial boundaries has guided the evolution of the discipline and the delimitation of ‘Internet governance’ practice in the last three decades.

Internet border and boundary-making is crucial today in the policy and scholarly debates about its governance. From the creation of national firewalls, to normative limits in the definition of intergovernmental and non-governmental technical organizations, to artefacts that facilitate and create obstacles for intellectual dialogue among different disciplines, or the infrastructure that defines a notion of digital sovereignty, all these elements appeal to the notion of boundaries and borders around the Internet.

When in 2006 ‘Who controls the Internet? Illusions of a borderless world’, edited by Goldsmith and Wu, was released, the notion of borders became a permanent issue for discussion. The editors’ argument in a nutshell equates the issue of control with the idea of borders mainly through the control of the Internet’s underlying material/physical infrastructure. Accordingly, because borders around the Internet exist and can be created, power and control can be exercised by traditional institutions of sovereign states. While over-simplifying the Internet’s inner workings, such a ‘realist turn’ (Mathiason 2007) was a reaction to the traditional libertarian and utopian discourse of the 1990’s. It promised a borderless world where governmental sovereignty was not an alternative, a position that was materialized in Perry Barlow’s ‘A declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace’ (1996).

Another powerful narrative that consolidated during that decade was derived from the creation of a private sector-led governance entity to manage the Internet’s Domain Name System and the DNS Root Zone. In this context, most governments played a minor role, except for the conspicuous case of the United States (Mueller, 2002). The tension surrounding the special status of this government resonated into the WSIS process1 and fed back into the creation of the UN-backed Internet Governance Forum (Drake 2016).

What became evident for some – and for a while – was that the Internet was overriding traditional notions of state sovereignty with new epistemes, new institutions and a new set of actors which aimed to redefine and transform the boundaries of communities, market rules and power. Multi- and transdisciplinary research and scholarship around the Internet, across the intellectual boundaries of STEM2, Law, Economics and Social Sciences (to name only a few) gained prominence as the proper approach to tackle such a complex ecosystem (DeNardis et al. 2020).

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1 WSIS: World Summit on the Information Society
2 STEM: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
Borders in the physical world (and their effect or lack of effect the Internet) and boundaries (or lack of boundaries) in Internet-related scholarship have defined the field of Internet governance. The issue of Internet control through national and institutional mechanisms has defined many jurisdicational and institutional aspects surrounding Internet governance. Several scholars have devoted considerable effort examining these issues for power and powerlessness in Internet governance (DeNardis 2014; Musiani et al. 2015). However, the specific ontology of how borders and boundaries define what is and what is not Internet governance has only been marginally addressed. Our work is an attempt to deal with how Internet governance’s conceptual borders and boundaries are framed, constructed and negotiated in a double sense: by the recurrence of sovereignty and the re-emergence of physical borders on the one hand, and the tensions that stem from the interaction and the limits of multi- and transdisciplinary research on the other.

Moving across digital boundaries

Traditionally, we have been thinking of the digital ecosystem from a ‘layered conception’ point of view: a telecom / network infrastructure; a logical layer that addresses the devices and organises the data flows of the infrastructure level distributed across the world (the Internet itself); and an applications and services layer, the so called ‘content layer’. On the one hand, this helps to organize and delimit the field, either from an analytical perspective or from a public policy perspective.

On the other hand, this approach has entrenched distinct epistemic communities, institutional solutions and normative approaches. So far, the telecom infrastructure layer has always been subject to regulation, while the applications and content layer has always received a liberal approach of deregulation to privilege innovation without the need to request authorization and the exercise of fundamental rights. The logical layer, in turn, has developed in non-state forums historically associated with the academic and technical community.

During the last fifteen years, the boundaries between one layer and another have been increasingly blurred and it is very difficult to draw a precise line between them. We have observed the clash between the worlds of ‘Internet governance’, understood from a more structuring perspective and the world of ‘governance of the behaviour of different social actors on the Internet’. Although rich, the coexistence between these two worlds generates confusion, cacophony, and difficulty in delimiting the field’s agenda.

What is more, the agenda of ‘Internet governance’ has broadened so much in the last decade as to become confused with the notion of ‘broader socio-political governance’ in a digital, Internet-mediated context. (As if, it would still make sense to delimit the digital as a separate sphere from the social, political, and economic ones?)

There is a tendency to treat the digital ecosystem in an ethnocentric way that disregards the complexity of the problems we face. It is increasingly evident that certain gatekeepers play a role in the ecosystem that, functionally, is infrastructural (even if they are traditionally considered application and service providers in the ‘content layer’). This is the case of app stores, cloud services and content distribution networks.

Milton Mueller’s work (2002; 2010; 2020) has attempted to define Internet governance by adopting one of the strictest conceptions around the phenomenon by focusing on the logic layer of the Internet ecosystem (mainly protocols), which determines the interoperable and quasi global features of the technology. Such a narrow approach has been increasingly under pressure due to the fact that borders and boundaries are constantly reinforced around the Internet. For instance, in the field of cyber security, the ‘isomorphic application of concepts of kinetic military force’ (Mueller 2020: 783) to a technology such as the Internet (which is for the most part not territorially bounded) has led to the re-territorialization of security in cyberspace, with growing re-asserting notions of sovereignty that are politically and conceptually defined by international law. Another case in point is the control of vast amounts of data by large platforms, which are legally bounded by the jurisdiction of their headquarters, with operations that affect individual and corporate users around the globe. These data processes are relevant for governance concerns ranging from the global political economy, socioeconomic develop-
ment and human rights, expanding the range of concerns and the scope of Internet governance agenda in a way that generates noise and raises coordination costs for the different disciplines involved in such a multi- or transdisciplinary endeavor.

According to Hofius and Kranke (2021) boundaries are not only as mechanism of exclusion but also a way of creating an object (in our case the Internet). From this perspective, practices of building, tearing apart or changing boundaries are crucial for understanding contemporary global governance. We are interested in exploring how old and new forces clash around the definitional borders of the Internet and the boundaries that delimit fields traditionally associated with Internet governance.

We argue that narrower policy definitions with clearer boundaries of what constituted Internet governance scholarship and practice in the past have blurred. The Internet has become ubiquitous and a strategic terrain where economic, political and sociocultural disputes are undertaken in policy spheres at the national, regional, and global levels. Such disputes have evolved around the material structure and components of the Internet-enabled digital ecosystem, as well as across the different academic fields that aim to tackle Internet-related phenomena. We also contend that overtly diffuse – and unbounded – conceptions of internet governance can lead to the blurring of the field and that the distinctions ‘governance of the Internet’, ‘governance on the Internet’ and ‘governance with the Internet’ have been treated ambiguously. It is important to bear in mind that the contest for the redefinition of these boundaries is not only legal and political, but also (socio)technical and protocological, epistemological and linked to conceptions of world ordering. We conclude by assessing the implications to increase conceptual consistency in policy making approaches to Internet governance and to enhance scientific validity and knowledge claims for the scholarly community.

References

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Re-Imagining the Idea of India: Negotiated Aspirations and Political Spaces Among the Indian-American Diaspora

Bidisha Biswas

In February 2020, the Seattle City Council voted to approve a resolution that condemned the Indian government’s authoritarian and Hindu majoritarian policies. The resolution was passed as a symbolic signal of support to ongoing peaceful protests in India against the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) efforts to change citizenship policies in ways that would dilute the secular fabric of the Indian republic. Following Seattle, at least six other cities passed similar resolutions. On the surface, these resolutions appeared quixotic: local city councils have no jurisdiction over US diplomatic matters and cannot directly influence the domestic politics of a sovereign nation. Yet, the resolutions generated heated debate, polarization and mobilization. Prior to each vote, Indian-American groups – those who supported the resolutions and those who opposed them – held public demonstrations, wrote petitions, contacted city officials, and organized fierce social media campaigns. The Government of India, through its Embassy and consulates, also exerted significant effort, including writing to the mayors of the concerned cities, towards stopping the passage of the resolutions. Watching these events unfold, I found myself wondering—why was so much emotion and energy being expended over non-binding, non-enforceable resolutions? Furthermore, what do pluralistic Indian-Americans hope to achieve by advocating for city-level criticism of the Indian government?

This research project is the product of my effort to answer these questions. I explore the motivations and actions of Indian-American activists. My research focuses on pluralistic Indian-Americans, that is, those who support a vision of a democratic and inclusive India, where people of all religions enjoy equal rights. I find that they are widening political spaces in novel ways. These spaces are distinctive in that they are shaped by aspirations rooted in the founding principles of the Indian republic. Pluralistic Indian-Americans are deeply concerned that India’s current authoritarian turn is threatening the democratic aspirations of the country. Through their actions, they are giving voice to their own faith in, and identification with, these aspirations. Using these ideas as their base, the activists are engaging in highly localized forms of moral signalling. At the same time, they are targeting numerous audiences in multiple spaces—local, national, international, and transnational. My research provides pathways for understanding the complex political interplay of aspirations, identity, memory, and legacy in diaspora politics.

Hindu nationalism and Indian-Americans

About 4.2 million people of Indian origin reside in the United States. Of these, about 2.6 million are US citizens, with the remaining being permanent residents or visa holders. Indians are among the most recent

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1 Located on the West Coast of the United States, the city of Seattle is the headquarters for a number of technology companies, including Microsoft and Facebook. The Seattle area hosts a large population of Indian origin.
immigrants to the US, with about 60% of them having arrived in the 2000s. As a result, many continue to maintain close ties to the homeland. Indian-Americans are one of the wealthiest immigrant groups in the US, with considerable financial clout and increasing political power.

The BJP and its allied organizations, together called the Sangh Parivar, have long courted the Indian diaspora for support. Since coming to power in 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made diaspora outreach a key element of India’s foreign policy—and of his own, carefully managed persona as a charismatic, worldly leader. Modi has been particularly assiduous in his attempts to woo Indian-Americans. The popular media and existing academic literature have also focused on pro-Modi sympathies among Indian-Americans—partly as a result of the Indian’s government’s own astute and selective use of social media. This gives weight to the widely held perception that Hindu nationalism enjoys broad support among Indian-Americans.

My research has shown that this perception is misleading. While Mr. Modi remains popular among many Indian-Americans, a significant number also question him and his party’s muscular agenda. Opposition to Prime Minister Modi’s Hindutva (Hindu nationalist) policies goes back several years. In 2005, pluralist groups were able persuade the US government to deny Mr. Modi a visa to enter the US because of his poor track record in human rights. This ban stayed in place for almost a decade and was lifted in 2014, when Mr. Modi became the Prime Minister of India. Between 2014 and 2019, as Mr. Modi cemented his powerful position in Indian politics, the pluralistic diaspora was relatively quiet, although not entirely dormant. However, after peaceful protests swept India in December 2019, anti-Hindutva groups in the US (and elsewhere in the world, including in many European cities) became increasingly active. They organized marches, petitions, social media campaigns, and outreach to legislators, all to call attention to India’s declining democratic status. Recognizing that the Trump administration was unlikely to take their side, these groups turned to city resolutions as a way to signal that the US government should, normatively, express its concerns over the changing political currents in India.

**Understanding diaspora motivations: the importance of history**

My research has shown diaspora movements are most effective when there is a single mobilizing issue, such as the 2002 anti-Muslim violence in Mr. Modi’s home state of Gujarat or the 2019 protests that swept India. Moreover, in their actions, diaspora groups tend to be reactive — responding to, rather than shaping, the politics of their home country. At the same time, their underlying commitment has deeper, ideological roots.

In describing their motivations, pluralist activists often referred to the ideals outlined in the Constitution of India, adopted in 1949, which enshrined democracy, fraternity, equality, and justice as the core principles of the Indian state. Such a vision, given the country’s high poverty levels and intense sociopolitical divisions, took significant ambition and political imagination.

These principles represented not the reality of the country at the time of its founding, but the aspirations that were to guide it. **Aspirations** are large, future-oriented, transformative goals which can only be achieved through sustained commitment and action. The activists I have spoken to all expressed the fear that these aspirations faced an existential threat from authoritarian and majoritarian forces within India. Often, they would often refer to their pride, as Indians, in the Constitution and in the extraordinary intellect of those who drafted it. One respondent described the framers, and, in particular, Dr.B.R. Ambedkar, India’s first Law Minister and Jawaharlal Nehru, the country’s first Prime Minister as the country’s ‘greatest generation’. Another said that he felt ‘so much pride in Indian democracy, which was a unique and bold experiment in history’. This respondent lamented that, now, he ‘had to keep a little bit quiet about that’. Activists affirmed that
they had a responsibility, both as Indians and as Indian-Americans, to extend support to those who, in India, were engaged in a struggle to preserve those very aspirations. While right-wing nationalists refer to a glorified, sanitized vision of the past as their guide, pluralists are basing their actions on a more modern history—that of the aspirations that framed the founding of the Indian Republic in 1947. Furthermore, their current concerns tie directly to the global wave of authoritarianism and right-wing populist policies: almost all the activists I interviewed connected Prime Minister Modi to other strongmen leaders, such as former US President Donald Trump and the President of Turkey, Recep Erdogan, among others.

Aspirations and multiple spaces

Aspirations are, by their transformational nature, difficult to realize and might, in fact, seem very remote and abstract. In order to mobilize the larger public, activist leaders must find ways to translate these ideals into actions. This is where high-publicity events come in: they help frame immediate steps that can be taken in the interests of supporting or preserving larger aspirations. For example, signaling support for peaceful protestors in India becomes a tangible way for the Indian diaspora to stand up for democracy.

The diaspora occupies a blurred geographic space, caught between the homeland, the adopted country, and the many bridges between the two. As such, pluralists seek to be heard in political spaces that are local, national, international, and transnational. At the local level, where they arguably have the most political access, activists are exerting their influence on officials in their community as a form of moral signaling. These local activities, in turn, are expected to influence decision-makers at the national level. For example, while expressing support for the resolution criticizing the Modi government, Seattle city officials called on the United States Congress, which does have jurisdiction over foreign policy, to pay heed to the deteriorating democratic conditions in India. In addition, pluralist groups have also formed coalitions to collectively ask the US State Department to raise their concerns with the Indian government. Here, the goal is not to alter the arc of US-India relations, but to use US-India bilateral cooperation as a platform to raise normative questions. At the international level, the diaspora is also directly challenging the Modi government’s claims to enjoying broad diaspora support. It is important to note that most Indian-Americans are not seeking an overthrow of the government. Rather, they are signaling to the Indian state and society that they oppose the policies of the current government.

Because Mr. Modi has invested considerable effort in building up his own global persona, and linking his image to India’s reputation as a country, this counter argument is seen as vital. Transnationally, activists are using social media and direct communication to build coalitions with diaspora groups in other countries, with the goal of applying larger, and louder, normative pressure on the Indian state.

Conclusion

My preliminary findings provide some interesting pathways for understanding diaspora motivations, frames, and actions. First, diasporas can be deeply motivated by transformative aspirations, rooted in the history of their home country. At the same, while their ideals are shaped by the past, they are not determined by it. Pluralistic activists are keenly attuned to the path-dependent processes by which democracies consolidate or wither. Second, activist leaders are availing of changing political opportunities both in India and the US to translate those aspirations into a clear articulation of the actions necessary to protect the ideals they see as being under threat. Third, while diaspora populations indicate respect for India’s sovereignty and take pride in aspects of India’s history, they occupy an amorphous political space which transcends national boundaries and static views of citizenship. Furthermore, pluralistic activists believe that, through their actions, they are strengthening both the idea and the practice of democratic India. As one respondent told me, ‘the Constitution [of India] was definitely designed to be inclusive, and the current government’s policies are exclusionary…. I’m fighting… [to protect] the spirit with which the Constitution was written, to get back to an inclusive concept of the people of India’.

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The most basic, technical definition of international development includes a transfer of funding and infrastructure from donor to recipient countries, either free of charge or on concessional terms. Within International Relations there are many ways to look at this process. For example, from a realist perspective, international development can be viewed as a geopolitical field, an arena of power struggles in which donors aid certain parts of the world to advance and safeguard their strategic interests there. In a global governance take, in turn, international development is conceptualised as a multi-level architecture composed of actors – donors, international organisations, recipient governments, non-governmental organisations and beneficiary communities – with structural relations and principles regulating cooperation. Critical approaches, such as postcolonial theory, denounce a neo-colonial logic of foreign-funded development interventions; they view international development as a discourse which cherishes a specific, linear vision of progress and modernity that is deeply rooted in the experience of European Enlightenment, and criticise the expansion of Western rationality to countries and communities which have different development trajectories. This is not an exhaustive list of possible analytical approaches. Moreover, the few lenses sketched out here are not mutually exclusive. However, one important dimension which deserves more attention from International Relations (IR) researchers concerns normative and emotional interactions taking place within the international development system.

This micro-level, bottom-up approach, largely stemming from the anthropology of development (Olivier de Sardan 2005; Lewis and Mosse 2006) and emotional geography (Clouser 2016), pays attention to the dynamics on the ground. Ultimately, this is where donor-funded development interventions are enacted and negotiated in everyday practice. From this perspective, international development can be seen as a constellation of international, national and multiple local spaces characterised by heterogeneous normativities, i.e. value systems and beliefs, ideas and ideals, forms of learning and knowing, and ways of doing (practices). Emotions are part of this picture because interactions which bring two social worlds into confrontation involve processes in which the various involved actors make sense of each other and position themselves towards each other, which is unavoidably laden with affect. While IR researchers often overlook this aspect of international development, seeing it as impressionistic and anecdotal, it needs to be recognised that any interaction taking place on a very local level within the donor-recipient framework is normative and emotional by definition. This happens irrespective of the field, either social or technical, because the identification of core problems and preferred solutions cannot be the same among all involved actors. Yet as I became convinced in the course of my own long-term field research in Tajikistan, some of the most complex and emotional international-local interactions arise around programmes and interventions which target the very social fabric, and particularly gender relations.

**Overlapping normative spaces**

The field of women’s empowerment in Tajikistan – a Central Asian, post-Soviet Muslim-majority republic, illustrates such a normative and emotional interplay.
Over the last hundred years, this country has been subject to two very different models of women’s empowerment, both of which were promoted from outside: the statist Soviet and the liberal international. In different time periods, using different rhetoric and means, these two models have aimed to reshape the local gender order. But in the absence of either legitimacy or means to do so, both models needed to find ways to coexist with the local order, paving a way to a certain normative hybridity on the ground.

The first external campaign to enhance the situation of Tajik women, framed as the ‘liberation of the women of the East’ (osvobozhdenie zhenshchin Vostoka), was launched in the mid-1920s, with the establishment of the Soviet power in Central Asia (Northrop 2004; Kamp 2011). The Soviet Union justified its expansion in the region by putting an end to feudal labour relations and promising decent employment for all. Moreover, given that in the Marxist-Leninist tradition religions were seen as the opium of the people, this campaign also aimed to save local women from religious oppression which, according to the Bolsheviks, justified early and forced marriages, bride price and polygyny. The Soviet women’s empowerment model was violent, especially in its early stages in the 1920s and 1930s. Among other measures, it included highly symbolic unveiling campaigns which were voluntary in theory, but often mandatory in practice. In later decades, however, the mass-scale Soviet modernisation project proved deeply transformative and largely participatory (Kalinovsky 2018) – it relied on what in today’s development language we might describe as building of ‘local ownership.’ Under the banner of fostering socialist subjects, women, equally with men, were provided with literacy, education, vocational skills, secure employment and vast welfare. Nevertheless, the reception of this campaign on the ground was ambiguous and the degree of ‘success’ of the Soviet project varied across time and space. Throughout the more than sixty years of Soviet statehood in Tajikistan, Soviet women’s empowerment encountered resistance of local population, particularly in rural areas. It took various forms, starting from insurrection campaigns by Muslim traditionalists who belonged to the Basmachi movement, through more mundane, hidden forms of resistance taking place in individual households, which tried to safeguard the socially and historically established forms of gender power relations.

The second external women’s empowerment model started being promoted in Tajikistan after the country’s independence following the collapse the Soviet Union in 1991. This happened with the influx of foreign aid to the country, in the context of a breakdown of the centralised command economy and an acute economic crisis, which was additionally aggravated by local power struggles and which culminated in a civil war (1992-1997). In those turbulent times, international, mainly Western-funded women’s empowerment projects aimed to support local women by fostering gender equality and women’s integration into a newly established market economy (Simpson 2006). These projects sought to free local women from multiple ‘evils’: communism, poverty and patriarchy which foreign donors associated with Muslim, collective lifestyles. They were guided by an underlying neoliberal rationality which implied an understanding of women’s empowerment through the prism of individual rights, and also individual – rather than collective or statist – responsibility for wellbeing. The means to achieve such empowerment involved provision of basic social services, accompanied by information campaigns raising women’s awareness about their rights, and also more controversial methods, such as promotion of microfinance as a way to increase women’s economic independence. These measures have not been customised for Tajikistan, but rather are standard solutions promoted by donors in the so-called developing countries. While the capitalist underpinnings of international women’s empowerment fundamentally differ from the Soviet socialist model, local resistance to these interventions has been formulated along similar lines. Like in Soviet times, contemporary donor-funded projects are often perceived as undermining local family structures and criticised for disrupting the social organisation of family, neighbourhood and society, which is based on gender and age hierarchies.

Brokerage and emotions

Bringing together two normative models with fundamentally different foundational ideas – the external and the local one – is not an easy task and can be carried out only by development brokers (Lewis and Mosse 2006). These are individuals or social groups who find themselves at a crossroads: they understand the logic of both models, enjoy legitimacy among promoters and supporters of both, and are able to bridge conflicting demands in everyday practice. Brokering is emotional in that it requires a high degree of self-re-
flexivity, ability to control one’s emotions and simultaneously to evoke emotions in other people in order to mobilise support. It demands creativity and ability to improvise. But also, it implies a constant stress, pressure and exposure to critical attitudes, including doubts about loyalty on the part of donors and accusations of betrayal by community members. Brokers are held responsible for normative frictions.

In Soviet times, such brokerage in the field of women’s empowerment was performed by members of state-promoted civil society organisations: the Soviet youth organisation (Komsomol), and from the late 1950s onwards also women’s councils (zhensovety) and girls’ unions (sovet devushek). As part of this grassroots work, young people were tasked with mainstreaming the Soviet ideology locally, often in the same communities where they grew up, and which frequently resisted the Soviet modernisation. Illustrative of difficulties of such brokerage is Hasan Arbakesh, a 1965 Tajikfilm about the establishment of the Soviet power in Tajikistan in the 1920s and 1930s, directed during the Khrushchev Thaw by Boris Kimyagarov. One of the characters in this story is Sadaf, a young woman who liberates herself from parents who are planning her forced marriage to a rich, old man. Sadaf educates herself and soon starts teaching children at a newly established school in the village. This is a somewhat idealistic representation produced by Soviet cinematography, yet it is representative of social ostracism and threats of violence which Sadaf and other Komsomol members were exposed to, particularly in early Soviet times.

After Tajikistan’s independence, normative brokerage in the field of women’s empowerment became the task of the newly established local non-governmental organisations (NGOs). By implementing internationally-funded projects, they started to navigate between international donors and local communities, just like Komsomol members used to do between the Soviet power and the population. Often, these NGOs were founded by the former Komsomol members who have adapted their previously developed skills to the new, post-Soviet reality. In the course of conversations which I had with leaders of women’s NGOs during my fieldwork, many admitted that they aligned with the international women’s empowerment agenda because they wanted to safeguard the achievements of Soviet-era women’s empowerment, fearing the increasing role of religion after the Soviet collapse. Just like Sadaf back in the first years of Soviet power, in the 1990s the new brokers faced threats of violence from the Islamist opposition in the Tajik civil war. Although the religious fraction gradually disappeared from the political scene once the war ended, the women’s NGO leaders are still confronted with problems of legitimacy among the local population, that often perceives internationally-funded projects as disconnected from local reality and loosening the family, which for many is the only safety net against the precariousness resulting from the market economy.

International development is a highly normative and emotional enterprise. This is particularly the case on the very local level, in spaces where divergent visions of local order are negotiated – in villages, Komsomol venues and NGO offices. Zooming-in to these spaces offers IR researchers a new, bottom-up lens to think about international development interventions through the eyes of participants of these processes.

References


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In 2018, before the viral qualities of globalisation became apparent, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimated that some 5.6 million students worldwide were involved in cross border education (OECD 2020). From export income to international goodwill and cooperation, the benefits of international education seemed indisputable. By 2020, a remarkably different picture had emerged as international border closures reduced the worldwide circulation of international students to a fraction of their pre-pandemic numbers. Considered a ‘leader’ in exporting education, Australia has witnessed significant financial losses that are now undermining the viability of its universities (Rizvi 2020). Australian universities have also been drawn into a foreign policy maelstrom, criticised for failing to uphold academic freedom in the face of their dependency on international student fees (HRW 2021). Not for the first time have educational exchanges and their contributions to cultural and public diplomacy been questioned (Bu 1999; Lehman 2020; Mulvey 2019). Where soft power narratives once claimed space, the rhetoric now gestures to ‘hard power’. Emotions are running high.

Motion and emotion share a relationship in etymology. The Latin for motion, movere, captures external movements of bodies and objects. Emotion – emovere – describes the internal movements of the heart, ‘to agitate’; ‘to stir’ (Wiktionary 2021). When people cross borders to live or study in another country, they encounter events, cultural Others, ideas, and different ways of knowing. These encounters of sameness and difference are emotionally ambivalent; they are suggestive of unintended possibilities. The pedagogical desires of governments, in short, are as likely to be erased, as they are to be consolidated in university classrooms and neighbourhoods (Bu 1999; Laifer & Kitchen 2017). The desire to know, and the passion to ignore, are matters of emotion.

In this article, I argue for a focus on emotions to understand the relations between international education and public diplomacy. Emotions and emotional discourses are an avenue to understand the material and social worlds encountered by international students during their study sojourns. Public diplomacy, a desired objective of governments and institutions, is furthered when everyday encounters allow for emotions to be processed into ‘cosmopolitan sociabilities’ – social relations of mutuality and respect (Glick-Schiller & Cagler 2016; Ang et al 2015). To explore the place of emotions in both creating and limiting possibilities for cosmopolitan sociabilities, I draw on empirical insights from Australia and from a (pre-pandemic) study into the emotional geographies of international student mobilities in East Asia (Sidhu, Ho & Yeoh 2020).

Emotions as social and historical processes

An influential contribution to understanding the possibilities and tensions underpinning ‘a world on the move’ is Sara Ahmed’s framework of ‘affective economies’ (Ahmed 2014). Inspired by psychoanalytic insights and Marx’s theory of commodity value, Ahmed challenges the common-sense assumption that emotions are private, interiorised, psychological dispositions. She enquires into the political work done by emotions to mediate the relationships between self and other, individual and collective, private and public, psychic and social, personal and geopolitical. As a relational force, emotions drive the circulations of ideas and imaginaries, simultaneously connecting and disconnecting people and places. In their (pre)emergent forms, emotions shape actions and experiences even before they are named and rationalised. Their ‘sticky’ qualities allow emotions to adhere selectively to subjects and objects, drawing some together, and others apart (Svašek & Skrbiš 2007).
International education encounters and cosmopolitan sociabilities

Perceptions of hospitality and hostility are uppermost in the minds of students and their families in choosing study destinations. In our study of international students in East Asian universities\(^1\), the ready availability of scholarships – seen as a gesture of hospitality – influenced students to choose an Asian study destination. For students and their families, the prospects of experiential hardships and hostility in ‘a white majority society’ were driving forces in moving away from the ‘west’. Discrimination, social isolation, and being called into being as a lesser subject because of language difficulties, generated disquiet and anxiety (Sidhu, Ho & Yeoh 2020; Benesch 2017). The rising reputations of Asian universities made visible through ‘world-class’ league tables, meant that students could aspire to have an education of ‘global’ standing while remaining regionally anchored.

Our study was conducted at a time when hostile emotions were circulating between China and Japan over sovereignty disputes regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, between Japan and Korea over reparations for ‘comfort women’, and China and Taiwan in relation to the One-China policy. The study’s respondents though, were largely appreciative of their opportunities to have access to polyphonic conversations about these unresolved geopolitical tensions from the 20th century. Living overseas, they observed, gave them the opportunity to question the hold of hegemonic nationalist discourses. In their words, they could ‘view the same event from different perspectives’; ‘... think about things’: ‘have a broader perspective’. Homogeneity of thought was regarded as highly undesirable. Having surrendered the emotional capital that comes with being ‘loyal’ citizens, the international student participants nonetheless acknowledged their love and pride of country while maintaining a desire to differentiate themselves from officialdom. Pleading the excuse of heavy study loads, they maintained a wary distance from their ‘ultranationalist’ peers. The diversity of their social positionings meant that students expressed varying degrees of candour about ‘social problems’ in their home countries. Those with access to political capital seemed to experience less discomfort with the order of things compared to their peers (Sidhu, Ho & Yeoh 2020, Chapter 6).

Their everyday interactions on and off campus exposed students to different groups of people – other international students, co-nationals, co-ethnics, and host country students and citizens. For the greater part, these were convivial and respectful encounters with some limits: inter-cultural mixing with host country students was reported to be less frequent compared to relations with other international student communities. Hyper-competitive East Asian academic cultures and language barriers reduced the spaces for sociable encounters (Sidhu, Ho & Yeoh 2020; Collins et al 2014; Fincher & Shaw 2009; O’Connor 2020).

Emotional matters: The limits of cosmopolitan sociabilities

Education’s centrality in reproducing national, social, and cultural orders makes it an emotional matter. In schools children learn to embody the emotional rules and roles that maintain who belongs in ‘the nation’ and ‘community’. In the teaching and learning spaces of universities, emotional discourses elicit different levels of regard towards international students. Students from ‘friendly’ countries receive comparatively warmer responses, in contrast to those from ‘rouge’ nations. Those from dangerous places might be seen as embodiments of threat, whether as vectors of virulent diseases (Smith 2020; Tao 2020), or threats to

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\(^1\) Globalising Universities & International Student Mobilities in East Asia (GUISM), funded by the Singapore Ministry of Education Tier 2 grant scheme (Grant number MOE 20089-T2-1-101). Principal Investigator: Ho, Kong Chong.
national security (Kakuchi & Sharma 2021). Cultural others might be also desired if seen as strategic assets to improve economic competitiveness (Saxenian 1999; Ho & Ge 2011; Liu-Farrer et al. 2021).

In many national settings, emotional discourses are usefully mobilized to construct binaries between ‘ideal’ students who are considered ‘deserving’ of their university places and Others whose arrival signals a breakdown of the ‘correct’ order of things. As cultural outsiders, international students in Australia may initiate compassion as they struggle with stress-inducing events such as the loss of familiarity and difficulties of high-level learning in different languages. Reinforcing these narratives are academic discourses portraying international students as melancholic subjects at risk of ‘culture shock’ and poor mental health, burdens that impose further demands on stretched institutional resources. As outsiders, international students may also evoke generalized resentment through narratives of injury. Their presence is equated with the displacement of the normative national subject (‘white working class’) who is seen to be denied opportunities (Indelicato 2018). Damage and injury to academic ‘standards’ is also offered as a rationale against the presence of international students, perceived to have ‘purchased’ an education. The spectre of ‘bogus students’ and ‘backdoor migrants’ positions students as lacking integrity. They come to be seen as abusing the hospitality of the state and its citizens (Robertson 2013). Cultural chauvinism becomes ‘understandable’.

Gripped by feelings of resentment at an imagined injury, it is easy to ignore the purposeful manner through which the education-migration nexus is assembled to further various economic interests (Hawthorne 2010; Robertson 2013). International students have been the objects of invitation and seduction, feted by cultural attaches and education agents, and primed by sophisticated marketing imagery to choose countries like the UK and Australia as study destinations: ‘Britain is Great’; ‘Australia Unlimited: Growth and Opportunity’. These market-making practices obscure the injuries endured by international students who are exposed to the predations of neoliberal regimes. Unfamiliarity with host country norms and legalities have exposed a sizeable number to banal and serious harms including wage theft, migration fraud, and sexual and racial harassment by co-nationals and host nationals (MWJI 2020; Marginson et al. 2012).

‘We tend to feel without history [but] what is felt has a history’ (Indelicato 2018:1). In deliberating on how international education encounters might be channelled to generate cosmopolitan sociabilities and renew public diplomacy in a post-COVID world, it is important to start with emotional histories. What might we learn by feeling with the recipients of ‘aid’ scholarships, past and present, in their navigations of mobility? Or with ‘choice-exercising’ international students persuaded to invest in the value of international education credentials?

Educational scholarships are normatively framed as ‘gifts’ to ‘aid’ the improvement or advancement of individuals, countries and regions. Restoring a history to the ‘gift’ of the scholarship is a generative move. It brings nuance and texture to understanding the limits of cultural diplomacy and ‘soft power’. By way of example, Australia’s Colombo Plan, a post-war scholarship programme, was inaugurated as a development assistance project for the newly independent countries of Southeast Asia. Less publicised was the Plan’s objective to reconfigure Australia’s reputation from an enthusiastic advocate of a racialized immigration regime to a benevolent and humanitarian country in the emerging moral landscapes of a decolonizing world order (Auletta 2000; Oakman 2010). Long socialised by emotional discourses of fear and anxiety about the country’s racial and territorial vulnerability from an ‘over-populated’ Asia, Australians had to be re-educated to accept Asians. New social imaginaries had to be fashioned. In promotional pamphlets, documentaries, adult and children’s literature and official speeches, metaphors of infancy sketched Asians as child-like, non-threatening and passive, seen to be growing in maturity through benevolent foreign aid programmes. Recipient countries were, naturally enough, forthcoming in interrogating these discourses but their desires to become fully sovereign by acquiring scientific, technological, industrial and administrative capacities ensured their participation (Oakman 2001).

With self-funded students eclipsing the numbers of scholarship holders for the period of its existence, the Colombo Plan became an important instrument in generating desire for an Australian education. These desires would later flourish, primed up by elaborate technologies of persuasion to amplify ‘demand’ from Asia. A wholesale re-modelling of ‘supply’ dynamics produced an ‘education export industry’ estimated to be worth some 25 billion EURO (AUD $40 billion).

And so it was until the arrival of the ‘2019 novel coronavirus’. Looking for public support in the face of the collapse of their business models, universities have been chided for neglecting their priorities to ‘educate Australians’ (Tudge 2021). These and other governmental pronouncements have set in motion emotions of resentment, whittling further the prospects for public diplomacy (Bongiorno 2021). In these testing times, universities must not fall prey to fear and resentment. Their contribution to cosmopolitan sociabilities remains more important than ever before.
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Examining the EU’s Ability to Shape Global Politics

Interview with Tobias Debiel on the Peace Report 2021

Prof. Dr. Tobias Debiel is Co-Director of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research, as well as Deputy Director of the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

QM | The Peace Report of the leading German peace research institutes has been examining the global situation since 1987 and each year makes clear recommendations for German policy in Europe. The fact that this year is different did not escape the Peace Report’s purview.

Prof. Debiel: That is absolutely right. The transatlantic relationship in particular has undergone a fundamental change since Joe Biden took office. In previous years, the EU had to struggle to preserve and defend key achievements of global cooperation within the framework of international institutions. Now, under the new president, the U.S. sees itself as a leader of multilateral problem-solving and democratic values. This normative shift is also influencing geopolitical constellations. Former U.S. President Donald Trump had virtually abandoned friendship and partnership with Europe in the form we had known for decades; Joe Biden, on the other hand, is demonstrably seeking collaboration. This is meant seriously, but not altruistically. He is interested in an alliance vis-a-vis the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation. These are seen not only as rivals for spheres of influence, but also as ideological opponents. The EU cannot afford to be equidistant from the geopolitical power poles on this issue. At the same time, it must be careful not to be drawn into a replay of Cold War thought patterns.

QM | Europe can do more; Europe must also want more. But Europe finds itself in a changed field of forces. What power-political challenges does the Peace Report see?

Prof. Debiel: With regard to Europe, the relationship with Russia, which is at an atmospheric low, is central. Western policy after the Cold War, which took little account of Russian interests and perceptions, is certainly partly responsible for this. A great power that was already in decline was given the impression that it should just be recognized as a regional power that was also to be contained. In the past decade, however, Russia under Putin has significantly undermined the basis of trust for reliable cooperation. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, which violated the territorial sovereignty of an OSCE member state, was a dramatic blow. Moreover, the violent conflict in Ukraine continues, not least in light of Russian support for insurgent regions. In the Syrian war, Russia has sided with the brutal Assad regime and blocked the UN Security Council. Repression of Russian opposition figures is also on the rise. Finally, it is hard to avoid the impression that the Russian leadership is interested in destabilizing Western democracies.
QM | But isn’t the real geopolitical challenge for Europe the relationship with the rising world power China?

Prof. Debiel: Quite so. As the EU rightly points out in its strategy documents, China is a partner, competitor and rival at the same time. In the U.S., the dominant perception is one of geopolitical and ideological rivalry. And there are good reasons for this, if we only think of the territorial conflicts in the South China Sea, the interference in Hong Kong or the suppression of the Uyghurs in China’s northwestern province of Xinjiang. However, confrontational thinking neglects the fact that we are in urgent need of cooperation on humanity’s problems such as global climate change – and that the Chinese leadership has also shown itself willing to cooperate. Nor can it be denied that China has provided important impetus for infrastructure development in emerging and developing countries with its Belt and Road Initiative and its proactive Africa policy. Even if there is competition with the West in these areas, the interest in the stability of crisis-prone countries also unites them. This is where we need to start.

QM | In conflicts, diplomacy relies on negotiations and talks even with actors perceived as difficult. At the level of heads of state, Biden recently demonstrated this when he met Vladimir Putin in Geneva.

Prof. Debiel: After harsh rhetoric – including in-person – toward Putin, the summit was an important step by the Biden administration to re-engage in dialogue with Russia. This does not sweep any problems under the rug, but it follows the détente logic that for all the antagonisms, dialogue must not break down. Russia’s ability to constructively shape world politics is admittedly limited. But there are a number of conflicts in which it is influential as a veto player. Against this backdrop, it is also crucial for the EU not to let contact break off despite an icy climate. The conflicts in Ukraine and the southern Caucasus in particular cannot be settled against Moscow’s will. The EU should use all means of diplomacy here, for example by appointing a special representative for the Ukraine conflict. And it should strategically consider where economic incentive systems increase Russia’s and regional actors’ willingness to cooperate.

QM | In view of Russia’s behavior in recent years, however, should the EU not rather play the sanctions card?

Prof. Debiel: I am generally cautious about the effectiveness of sanctions against major powers. Certainly, such measures are sometimes unavoidable in the case of serious breaches of international law principles and gross human rights violations in order to credibly condemn such violations. Sanctions also serve to reassure the West, which should not be underestimated, by drawing red lines, so to speak, with regard to the counterpart’s willingness to cooperate. But they rarely lead to a change in behavior on the part of powerful states. Rather, they often trigger a rally-rounder effect, i.e. the government in question can mobilize internal support against outside interference.

Probably the most effective lever for Germany against Russia is the Nordstream 2 project. I consider it highly problematic from a geopolitical and ecological point of view. However, the German government got involved with it and cannot abandon it without high costs. In addition, contractual compliance is an important component of reliable relations. For this reason, suspending and terminating the project is probably only the last resort in the event of another serious violation by Russia, such as a deliberate aggravation of the situation in Ukraine. I hope that a situation does not arise where this decision is acutely necessary.
As central as the European challenges are, doesn’t the ability to shape global politics that you call for also involve the EU becoming more visible globally, such as in the fight against the Covid 19 pandemic?

Prof. Debiel: Indeed, the response to the pandemic requires a global effort. In the spirit of global solidarity, the EU is called upon to initiate significant financial transfers for the Global South that will benefit the vulnerable parts of the population. Debt relief is a prerequisite for poor countries in the Global South to mobilize additional resources to combat the direct and indirect consequences of the pandemic. COVID-19 has led to new problems in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. In the health sector, the challenge is to maintain basic services in many countries and expand access to public health systems for all population groups. Governments in the Global South depend on international support to make the necessary investments. It is therefore important to further expand existing initiatives, such as the EU’s cooperation with the African Union. The Global South is also dependent on international solidarity for the supply of COVID-19 vaccines. Last but not least, it is important that the temporary waiver regarding patent protection remains on the international agenda. This is not a panacea, but it can, together with technology and know-how transfer, possibly contribute to the medium-term development of corresponding production capacities in the Global South.

In the Peace Report, you argue that the consequences of the pandemic extend far beyond the health sector. What other repercussions are there?

Prof. Debiel: The pandemic has very obvious effects on extreme poverty and food security. Although data is difficult, estimates from the World Bank and the Food and Agricultural Organization suggest that the setbacks to the relevant SDGs are severe. Active follow-up is needed here to prevent a lasting downward trend. Incidentally, a setback in the fight against poverty can only be mitigated in the wake of the pandemic if the marginalized in urban areas are taken into account and social security systems and labor market policy instruments are expanded. Last but not least, the pandemic has highlighted the danger of international interdependencies and the vulnerability of globalized supply chains to crises. A partial decoupling of food markets, shorter supply chains, increased local production and the principle of food sovereignty can help prevent future crises. Developed countries also need to transform and regulate supply chains beyond agriculture. Following the adoption of the Supply Chain Act in Germany, it is now falls on the EU to make the next move.

Professor Debiel, thank you very much for this talk.
More Exchange At Eye-Level: European Research Cooperation With the People’s Republic of China

Anna Ahlers and Thomas Heberer

China does not currently enjoy a positive image in Europe\(^1\). This is primarily due to the country’s rise to global power status and the associated domestic and foreign policy tensions, as well as its robust and rather challenging assertion of its interests. Since 2014, there has been increasing reporting regarding how political developments in the People’s Republic under Xi Jinping are becoming more repressive. This increased centralization and control is primarily due to the implementation of a rigorous roadmap to the purported ‘comprehensive modernization’ of the nation by 2050. The Communist Party of China (CPC) has outlined these objectives in various plans and documents. For example, poverty eradication is targeted by 2021; by 2035, China should have become the world’s largest economic power and is to achieve leadership in ten high technologies; by 2050, the country is supposed to be an all-out modernized nation and a world power on par with the United States.\(^2\) According to the official understanding in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), achieving this goal requires a stable and orderly polity and a strong and competent political leadership.

The increasing conflict between China and the US is also casting its shadow and triggers a discussion on how the European Union (EU) and its member states should position themselves: a stronger rapprochement and alignment with the United States under President Biden or a middle course between the two world powers (cf. Heberer 2021). Recently, there has been a serious escalation in the relationship between the EU and the PRC with direct consequences for research and academic exchanges. After the EU adopted punitive measures against four senior politicians and a government entity in the PRC for human rights violations in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in March 2021,\(^3\) the Chinese government reacted promptly and sanctioned not only the relevant EU parliamentary subcommittee on human rights and other individual European politicians, but also a think tank and individual researchers (Global Times 2021).\(^4\) What further consequences this diplomatic escalation will have is not yet foreseeable.

Thus, the observable urge to reshape actions toward China is now coming to a head in a field that until now seemed largely untouched by political disputes: the field of scientific cooperation. On the one hand, European-Chinese scientific cooperation is flourishing and growing (e.g., Střelcová 2021). On the other hand, representatives of the natural sciences and engineering in particular have been complaining for some time about a ‘one-sided’ transfer with regard to cooperation projects, with the German side willingly providing its know-how, but Chinese researchers not providing theirs in return. At the same time, increasing restrictions on academic freedom in China have been observed, especially with regard to the social sciences and humanities; scholars are being more closely controlled and constrained in regards to content. The role of Party bodies and ideological control have increased significantly. In addition, there is sus-

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1. This is the abridged and revised version of a German-language essay that will appear in a special issue of Berliner China-Hefte.
picion that Chinese authorities are exerting influence on research and teaching at universities abroad, for example through Confucius Institutes. There are even accusations of espionage.

Commonalities and differences in expectations

Over the course of these increasingly intense debates, it is becoming clear how little insight there is in general into the procedure of the Chinese science system and with regard to the differences and similarities in the expectations of the cooperating partners. Basically, ‘academic freedom’ in our European understanding has not existed and does not exist at Chinese universities. The state expects research projects to contribute to solving practical issues; scientists and scholars are considered an important part of the nation, who have to contribute to the development and welfare of the country. This did not simply start with the founding of the PRC in 1949 or the inauguration of Xi Jinping, but is rooted in China’s political culture. For example, this culture was no different in the Republic of China in the 1930s and 1940s. The then ruling party Guomindang introduced ‘party curricula’ at schools and universities, and educational guidelines stipulated that the interests of the nation were to take precedence over everything else (Culp 2002: 51-55; Oldstone-Moore 2002: 163ff). In the 1930s, the writer and philosopher Lin Yutang described the contradiction between Western logic and Chinese practical thinking: while the latter grasps the object of research ‘as a living whole,’ Western logic breaks it down into ‘various manifestations’ (Lin 2015 [1935]: 148-150). Not least because of these observable normative differences, European cooperation partners have to deal with the criticism that research cooperation and outcomes tend to serve the Chinese state and would be of little use to scholars and the advancement of science in general.

The fact that authoritarian states such as China are not capable of cutting-edge research and innovation has already been sufficiently refuted. E.g., China’s rapid rise to the top ranks in international publication and citation indices within less than two decades is worth noting. As already indicated, the Chinese government has announced that China will be a leader in ten high technology fields by 2035 and the world’s No. 1 power in science and research by 2050. Ambitious goals, no doubt. Nevertheless, President Xi has repeatedly emphasized that technological and scientific innovation requires transnational cooperation (Xi 2020). This is a statement that should be taken seriously and, at the same time, can be harnessed to call for cooperation and dialog at eye-level. Even the Chinese government does not deny that scientific progress is ultimately...
only possible through transnational cooperation. At the same time, the European and the Chinese side obviously agree that cooperation is essential for the solution of global problems in the 21st century (such as, climate change, ecological and environmental problems, pandemics, etc.).

Accordingly, European research and higher education organisations have expressed a clear interest in maintaining and expanding academic cooperation with Chinese partners in their statements to date. Nevertheless, greater sensitivity and caution, as well as more systematic guidelines for dealing with the Chinese side are now being called for. This applies in particular when contractual agreements on scientific cooperation are on the table. Concerns about a lack of transparency in the design and management of partnerships and joint projects, a potential discrepancy in perceptions of ‘good scientific practice’, especially in terms of research ethics, integrity and the possible deviance from related rules, and risks of dual use and inadequate protection of intellectual property are at the forefront.

Moreover, it is becoming apparent that the EU – and, with varying degrees of intensity, the governments of the individual European states – would like to get China to accept European standards for research cooperation and technological exchange – it even declares them to be a prerequisite for cooperation. Joy Zhang, a professor of sociology at Kent University criticizes this way of imposing requirements on Chinese scientists. It would make more sense to learn to understand each other in this respect, instead of insisting on one’s own values without debate, she says. Moreover, she describes how Chinese scientists are alienated by the fact that Western colleagues are beginning to withhold research data unilaterally (Kelly 2021). Indeed, a dialogue between scientists and scholars from both sides on issues of quality assurance, normative practice and research ethics seems to be more meaningful than the attempt of political authorities to unilaterally set standards.

Staying aware of essentializing bias: Unproductive neglect, simplification, and prejudice

In the current, increasingly polarized debate, a few things are particularly striking: first, the European debate often fails to distinguish between the Chinese state on the one hand and scholars and universities on the other. Western logic often argues that since ‘everything’ in China is under the control of the Party state; ultimately all Chinese, including universities, scholars and students, should be regarded as ‘propagandists’ or even potential ‘spies’ of the Communist Party. Sociologist Zhang, quoted above, has pointed to some effects of this ‘racial profiling’. She describes the experience of Chinese academics and students who are quite critical of Chinese politics, but who are increasingly distrusted in Europe precisely because they are Chinese (Zhang 2021). Publicly questioning the integrity of Chinese academics and dismissing them wholesale as “spies” is ultimately counterproductive, Zhang explains. The world needs the Chinese academic community, and the latter needs cooperation with the West.

Not least, the publicly staged conflict between the West and China today is repeatedly ignited by questions around the role and function of the Confucius Institutes (CIs), whereas public knowledge about their functioning is often sweeping and imprecise. For example, most of these institutes in Germany are independent associations within the German law that – unlike the cases of Chinese-funded professorships in German universities – are not involved in research or substantive teaching. The accusations that the Chinese government would exert influence on class content and research on a broad front through these institutes can empirically – at least as far as Germany is concerned – not be corroborated. In this context, a recently published paper by the U.S. think tank Brookings (Horsley 2021) is interesting. The paper states that especially in times of a significant decline in the number of students learning Chinese or choosing China-related courses of study, there is a need for additional offerings in the areas of China studies and Chinese language skills. Various investigations, including those by the U.S. Senate, have not found any evidence of influence by CIs or even of espionage promoted by them at U.S. universities. Therefore, according to the report, the U.S. government should welcome these institutes.

6 In the Federal Government’s answer to a corresponding question by the FDP at the end of 2019, it stated with regard to the influence on research and teaching at universities: “The Federal Government has no knowledge of any indirect influence of the Confucius Institutes on the work of researchers, teachers and students at German universities” (p. 7). Answer of the Federal Government to the Small Question of the Members of Parliament Dr. Jens Brandenburg (Rhine-Neckar), Katja Suding, Mario Brandenburg (Southern Palatinate), other Members of Parliament and the FDP parliamentary group - Printed Matter 19/15009 - http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/155/1915560.pdf (accessed on 14 April 2021).

5 See also the overviews in d’Hooghe et al. 2018, Střelcová 2021.


Need for differentiation, eye-level, and dialogue

If we look at the Chinese academic landscape, differentiation is necessary. For example, there are clear differences in the treatment of the social sciences and humanities (SSH), which are subject to greater ideological scrutiny than the natural and technical sciences. In the latter, China is working its way to the top of the world. As for the former, there is the expectation that SSH should focus primarily on improving national welfare and solving domestic problems (e.g., Delman 2019; Greenhalgh and Zhang 2020). An interesting example of this practical orientation is the construction of ‘intelligent administration,’ the establishment of ‘emergency management agencies,’ and the introduction of an ‘emergency management’ degree program following from the impact of the corona crisis, which were proposed by a leading administration researcher at Zhejiang University. By now, the Chinese Ministry of Education has already decided to establish such a degree program at 20 universities across the country. However, there are also controversial debates in the Chinese scientific landscape. This is illustrated – to name just one example – by a statement from the renowned political scientist Yu Keping of Peking University, who, in an interview published in January 2021, criticized the overemphasis on ‘Chinese characteristics’ on the part of Chinese social scientists. In his view, this negates the idea of science as universal knowledge production. Moreover, he advocates ‘freedom of thought and a free academic environment for scholars.’ Instead of reasoning about ‘Chinese peculiarities,’ Chinese scholars should think more internationally, he says (Yu 2021).

Furthermore, significant differences exist between individual universities in China. This is related, among other things, to the political culture in different regions, with those provinces and universities with extensive external cooperative relationships usual-ly proving to be more open than those in central or western China. Long-standing and close cooperative relationships with Chinese universities and with individual scientists, through which trust has been built and which are therefore more stable, prove to be productive. It should also be understood that many Chinese academics are proud of the achievements of their country in recent decades, including in the fields of science and technology, and are making this known. Not to take this seriously, or to deny through general suspicion or a boycott that Chinese colleagues can also have an intrinsic interest in research and knowledge creation and are capable of asserting this against resistances would be presumptuous and detrimental to cooperation opportunities.

Overall, it is to be welcomed that academic institutions and public authorities in Europe are currently reflecting on their cooperation with China on the basis of experiences made and new signals from China. Ultimately, we can only influence developments in, with, and through cooperation. We consider dialogues to be central to this, which undoubtedly also requires cooperation at eye-level. Special bi- or multilateral academic dialogues not only at the level of science policy, but also at the level of scientific and scholarly associations or between partner universities could be helpful here. Nevertheless, cooperation at the individual level should be particularly encouraged. While larger institutions are more likely to facilitate a dialogue on general political and legal principles – and, if necessary, ensure their protection – scientific values are ultimately realized in concrete work and in intercultural negotiation processes among researchers, and finally evaluated by the global science community.

What is also missing is an in-depth and systematic assessment of the forms and effects of existing scientific cooperation with China, i.e. qualitative research on research in cooperative structures. Studies that
go beyond economic analyses of China’s technical innovation capacity, or classical research on higher education that only covers the training sector but not research. This would fill the knowledge gap that still exists between anecdotal descriptions of problems and the abstract normative blanket call for or rejection of cooperation. At the same time, it seems sensible to promote general China-competence in all branches of science and scholarship, not only with regard to China-related fields of study, but in all disciplines. It is quite disturbing that the number of students choosing to pursue a China-related major or to learn Chinese has declined significantly, precisely at a time when more knowledge, curiosity, and China literacy are needed. In addition, we should build new China-competence networks at the European level and ultimately strengthen the transfer of knowledge of China into society. Only in this way is informed and productive exchange possible. Dismantling academic cooperation would not only make European access to China more difficult, but also hinder a better understanding of this complicated and complex country.

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Critical Fantasy Studies Meets Global Cooperation Research: A New Research Agenda for Investigating Crisis Politics

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The COVID-19 pandemic is not only a global health crisis; it is expected to lead to lasting changes in various policy areas, including health, mobility, trade, industry, finance, and sustainability. We are in a formative moment which we might call the Corona Virus Crisis (CVC). Like any moment of shock and dislocation in history, the CVC does and will enable deep structural changes. It is therefore interesting and timely to investigate how global sustainability governance is influenced by CVC and how it will be reimagined and rearranged in its aftermath. Not only the changes in the practices and discourses but also the fantasies and imaginaries of global sustainability governance will change following the CVC. New priorities, synergies, and trade-offs in sustainability; new conceptions of recovery, improvement, and social transformation are already being (re)imagined. The extent to which we can contribute (as citizens and stakeholders) to these imaginaries in an equitable fashion might also determine what the ultimate future sustainability goals should be in a post-CVC global society.

Crisis and political change

Throughout time, and across the ideological spectrum, the relation between crisis and change is an important research theme for social scientists. As Milton Friedman (1962: 7) wrote, crises are moments when ‘the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable’. According to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985), such dislocatory moments open the social horizon to deeply structural changes and make a new symbolic order possible. In the context of the CVC, behaviours, policies, and ideas that seemed impossible only a few months ago are now considered both legitimate and necessary. Borders are closed; travel arrangements, conferences, world-wide entertainment, sports and business events are cancelled; most education has been moved to digital platforms; working conditions and employment options changed, and democratic rights have been suspended in many of the pandemic’s epicentres.

New practices and ideas following the CVC have already revealed emergent synergies and trade-offs between different policy objectives, especially in the field of sustainability governance. Measures taken by individuals and states, such as social isolation and travel bans reduced air pollution and carbon emissions (EEA 2020) improved water quality (Brunton 2020), resulted in banning of wet markets, and the sale of certain species of wildlife associated with the pandemic (McCall 2020). The CVC however also affected financial markets, igniting an economic downturn and instigating massive stimulus and bailout packages (Baldwin and Weder di Mauro 2020). While economic measures taken by some governments in response to CVC relax environmental regulations (Milman and Holden 2020), environmental groups call for a green and just recovery, and demand company bailouts to be made conditional on climate targets (Harrabin 2020). At the beginning of the pandemic, the United Nations (UN) has indefinitely postponed the Conference of the Parties (COPs) for biodiversity, oceans,

and climate change. In other words, the economic, political, and environmental dimensions of sustainability governance are being shaken up; finding a new balance between different policy objectives – including synergies and trade-offs – will require careful negotiation.

The global governance architecture currently in place to address and negotiate synergies and trade-offs in sustainability governance is the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), which works to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Culminating in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda provides a multi-level, holistic approach to pressing global problems, including health. Starting in 2020, the UN’s 75th Anniversary, A Decade of Action was launched to implement the SDGs. In late March, all UN institutions were already reassessing their policy areas, re-framing SDGs in the context of the pandemic (United Nations 2020). CVC has arguably thrown progress towards the SDGs decades back (Muelemann 2020), and scholars (e.g. Chonan 2020) as well as practitioners such as former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon have called for economic responses to be subsumed by environmental concerns in future sustainability governance (Ban and Verkooijen 2020).

The practices, discourses, and future imaginaries of sustainability governance are changing.

A new research agenda for global cooperation research: Critical Fantasy Studies

The study of future imaginaries and their relationship with policy practices, institutional narratives, and political contestations are increasingly central to sustainability studies. Notable examples of large networks and research programs include studies in urban (e.g. Mistra Urban Futures Program), and global environmental governance (e.g. the Future Earth Science Network). The Earth System Governance Project (ESG), the largest network of environmental governance research, has established ‘anticipation and imagination’ as one of the five research lenses that guides its global research program (Burch et al. 2019). This interest in anticipation and future, imaginaries and fantasies, in the psychoanalytical sense of the term has culminated in a rapprochement of the recently formed field of Critical Fantasy Studies (CFS) and studies of environmental politics and sustainability cooperation. CFS focuses on the psychoanalytic aspects of the political, particularly the role desire and the unconscious play in many of our practices and discourses, including our reactions to key dislocatory moments associated with ecological and pandemic crises (Glynos 2021).

The concept of fantasy is critical to further develop the understanding of nature and environment as inherently contingent and political (Behagel and Mert 2021). Accordingly recent literature highlights the political role of fantasy (Glynos and Stavrakakis 2008; Kapoor 2014; Eberle 2019), and regards fantasies as structurally entwined with discourse and meaning, desires and emotions that drive political choices as well as political ontologies and subjectivities. In the context of climate and sustainability politics this provides an important and novel perspective: discourses of nature and the environment hold a privileged position in this entwinement of language, desire, and
being (Glynos et al. forthcoming). At a time of great dislocation caused by ecological crises and global pandemics, fantasies of nature, and the relation between natures and cultures, both human and more-than-human, are central to analyse the transformation of political imageries and discourses.

This agenda can be furthered for various reasons, but particularly in the light of the last two years; exploring fantasies would help us understand the inertia around climate politics which is significantly different from policies around COVID-19. Behavioural and policy changes that seemed impossible only a few weeks ago were being introduced, legitimised, and normalised in response to the pandemic. To learn from this experience and apply some of these lessons to new fields could allow us find ways to tackle the climate crisis and other equally important sustainability issues.

My work at the Centre for Global Cooperation Research attempts to address some of the emergent questions in this novel research agenda. In a project titled Post-Corona Global Sustainability Cooperation: Imaginaries of New World Orders, I investigate: ‘During and after the CVC, how are the synergies and the trade-offs between different policy objectives and societal values being discussed, contested, and negotiated?’ and ‘How are recovery, improvement, social transformation imagined and what are the ultimate goals for a post-CVC global society?’ I use psychoanalytic approaches as a starting point, to pay attention to the unconscious and use political discourse theory to reveal the semiotic changes in sustainability politics and governance.

References


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In the various arenas of the Internet governance debate, one of the points frequently highlighted is the need to maintain the ‘open Internet’. Despite being commonplace in the discourse, this concept can assume different meanings to the diverse stakeholder groups in these discussions, depending on which fora the discussion is taking place. For example, ‘open Internet’ can be synonymous with net neutrality, which means the Internet applies a non-discriminatory approach to Internet traffic, with data being transmitted over the network regardless of its content, origin, or destination. Another possibility of understanding the term has to do with the non-liability of network intermediaries, which basically stresses that the fight against illicit activities on the network must reach the party finally responsible for those acts, rather than those providing the means of accessing and transporting data, such as the network infrastructure (like the transmission technologies, the DNS system, IP blocks, among others).

My research aims to open a dialogue between Germany and Brazil, viewing the open Internet as a value (i.e. a common good), and focusing on the regulatory aspects of it. Some questions guide this reflection: How has the open Internet as a value shaped regulations in Brazil and Germany, as well as the subsequent processes of legislation enforcement? Could Brazil and Germany learn from each other in order to maintain the open Internet? What risks can be anticipated through the debates that are taking place in Germany, and more generally in Europe, so that Brazil does not fall into the same traps when it comes to enforcing the open Internet both as value and from a regulatory point of view? Are there cases in which the regulations or their enforcement are a challenge to maintaining the open Internet as a value?

Reflecting on the Brazilian scenario, it is possible to see that the open Internet discourse influenced regulatory action. In 2009, when there was no Internet-specific legislation in the country, the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br) published the ‘Principles for the governance and use of the Internet’, which, despite not directly referring the term ‘open Internet’, mentions net neutrality and the non-liability of network intermediaries as two of the ten principles. CGI.br’s principles brought a set of values for the Internet in Brazil, which ended up influencing the regulation, as several were adopted into the Marco Civil Law of the Internet in Brazil, ratified in 2014. For example, the legislation ensures net neutrality and also adopts a special regime where Internet intermediaries can only be liable for damages resulting from content generated by third parties if, after a specific court order, they do not take appropriate actions to
make content unavailable. Following this legislation, the issue of net neutrality was heavily regulated by Decree 8771, which mentions that the National Telecommunications Agency (Anatel) is responsible for carrying out inspections and investigations of infringements regarding the technical requirements set out in the Decree, and taking into account the guidelines established by the CGI.br. In addition, the National Consumer Secretariat would monitor and investigate infringements that harm consumers, and the Brazilian Competition Defense System would be in charge of investigating economic infringations. Essentially, these entities have to work collaboratively in order to enforce net neutrality.

Despite this pioneering approach, observed in processes such as the publication of CGI.br’s principles, the approval of the Marco Civil Law and Brazil acting as host for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) on two occasions, the country has been losing ground as an international leader in Internet Governance arenas in recent years. Conversely, Germany stands out in this scenario, mainly after hosting the last in-person IGF in 2019, despite having a distinct trajectory in the open Internet debate. One of the first developments in this area was related to the liability of Internet intermediaries. The European Union was one of the first regions to be concerned with rules for digital spaces, especially related to electronic commerce, and published the E-commerce Directive as early as 2000. One of the effects of this regulation was the definition of three cases of exemptions for Internet intermediaries: mere conduit, caching, and hosting. Although this directive has been in place for more than 20 years, the European Commission launched a legislative initiative in late 2020 called the Digital Services Act (DSA), which aims to update the rules governing digital services. Therefore, it is possible that the intermediaries liability regime will be modified.

In the first decade of the 2000s, there was a discussion in Germany regarding net neutrality – soon abandoned in favor of a wider European debate on the subject – which led to the approval of the Open Internet Regulation in 2015. Among other things, the regulation established roles for the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs). After consulting stakeholders, the BEREC published guidelines for the implementation of the NRAs’ obligations in 2016. In this context, the NRAs, (Bundesnetzagentur in the case of Germany) have to monitor, promote and enforce the continued availability of non-discriminatory Internet access services at levels of quality that reflect advances in technology. Moreover, the NRAs have to publish reports on an annual basis regarding their monitoring and findings. In 2019, the European Commission published an evaluation of the implementation of the Open Internet Regulation. The main conclusion was that the Regulation’s principles are appropriate and effective in protecting the rights of end-users and promoting the Internet as an engine of innovation. No amendments were found to be necessary at this stage. As a consequence of this evaluation, the BEREC guidelines were updated to reflect the experience of the NRAs and of the European Commission during the last 4 years, providing clarity on commercial offers with differentiated pricing (like zero-rating offers), or differentiated quality. Some adjustments were also made to better fit to 5G use cases.

Concerning the preliminary findings of the research, it is possible to assert that the open Internet as a value influenced the processes of construction and enactment of regulations in both countries, but in different ways. In Brazil, the focus was on the creation of a principle-oriented legislation in relation to the Internet, with a focus on users’ rights and safeguards. In the European Union, there are specific regulations dealing with particular aspects, followed in some cases by guidelines for standardizing enforcement by different countries. One of the gaps observed in Brazil is precisely the lack of concrete enforcement guidelines in similar cases related to the open Internet, which could be a lesson to be learned from Germany. Furthermore, there is a lack of transparency in relation to the open Internet complaints received and how they are dealt with (for example, being published in an annual report, as is done in Germany). One risk to the open Internet that could be anticipated from the current German debate is the issue of combating copyright infringements through blocking at the DNS level, through an agreement directly between ISPs and copyright industry associations, but without an express court order.

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The worldwide expansion of capitalist economy in the second half of the 19th century was inseparable from the commodification of labor and property. One of the central achievements of the liberal state was to enshrine the protection of private property as a constitutional right. Unequivocal, exclusive, and individual property relations were regarded as a safeguard of free trade, while trade itself was seen as a contractual relationship between the partners involved. The goal of state policies was the replacement of older ‘imperfect’ common and overlapping property rights into a dualist scheme, beneficial above all for the worldwide expansion of a commodified land regime (Ubink et al. 2009). However, the commodification of landed property was accompanied by persisting rival communal, feudal and public property relations, manifest in litigations (Cottyn 2019). Politicians and intellectuals diagnosed the detrimental effect of commodification on the less affluent parts of society, without the means and skills to join the new capitalist economy.

The socially heterogeneous and composite polity of the 19th century Habsburg Monarchy is an ideal vantage point for a comparative analysis of the strategies of contemporary national legislative systems to ensure the liberalization of property and the criticisms of their work. In the Habsburg lands the commodification of landed property had begun already in the 18th century, while the legal codification itself started in 1848 and took regionally varying patterns. By the time the economic crisis of the 1870s hit the Monarchy, the conflict-ridden transformation of the property regime came to be seen as a manifestation of the ‘social question’ and a cause of growing mass poverty (Harmat et al. 2010).

The project analyzes the critique of the late-19th century liberal state as a deficient agent of capitalist economy from the hitherto hardly studied perspective of legal scholarship. Taking as its starting point the Habsburg Monarchy, it explores the assemblage of state criticism and civil legal reforms, involving the stakeholders, their strategies and decision-making processes in a transnational and comparative perspective. The analysis proceeds in three modules:

The first module charts the national dynamics and composition of the legislative fields involving legal scholars, bureaucrats, politicians, and legal/expert organizations, united by their criticism of modern private property and by the alternatives they presented (socially protective law, international private law, communal property etc.). Their activity shall be analyzed in relation to the practices and politics of state rule on the ground. One of the earliest cases of legal reform of land ownership and tenure occurred in post-Mutiny India in the 1860s, involving the internationally renowned legal scholar Henry Sumner Maine (1822-1888). Indeed, the Cambridge professor and legal advisor of the colonial government in post-Mutiny British India (1862-69) was one of the earliest and most prom-
inent critics of the liberal economic property regime in India (Mantena 2010). Well documented is also an Italian case in the 1880s-1890s, which owed a lot to the circulation of ideas set into motion by Maine. The third case study is fin-de-siècle Habsburg Monarchy, featuring the legislative work of the later Minister of Justice Franz Klein (1854-1926). The framework of the Habsburg and Italian legislative field was the emerging Central European Sozialpolitik, and the demand for social citizenship (Becker 2018). One of the most vocal critics of the very functioning of state legislation was Eugen Ehrlich (1862-1922), professor of Roman Law and rector of the University of Czernowitz in the Crownland Bukovina, whose work likewise reflects the impact of Maine.

The second module reconstructs the transnational communication between the selected national legislative fields, involving the legal experts, where the criticism of the liberal private property regime was taking place. It asks about successful collaboration and learning processes over time, also about discontinuities and cognitive dissonances. What were the central political and epistemological elements of the critique and how did they change over time? Maine is a central figure in this transnational circulation of ideas, and created an influential anthropological model of the native Indian ‘society of status’ in need of protection from the destabilizing encounter with modern liberal trade. He saw the transformation into a ‘society of contracts’ as an inevitable process, which was, however, accelerated and destructively enforced by colonial rule. His theoretical and practical work in the post-1857 colonial legislation and its reception constitutes the core of this second module. Indeed, in European legal scholarship on the modern property regime the legacy of Maine was paramount. In Italy his expertise was embraced in the context of an interaction between scholars and legislators that yielded positive results. The negotiations led to a corrective of private property legislation by enshrining alternative forms of communal property (Grossi 1981).

Which elements of the criticism of the liberal property regime, particularly those of Maine and Ehrlich, were transported into the 20th and 21st century? The global dimension of the adaptation of this legacy constitutes the third module of the project, which leads to the more recent (re)discovery of Ehrlich in legal sociology and the post-colonial anthropology of the state. (Hertogh, M. L. M., 2009) while diagnosing the ‘forgetting’ of Maine. The module analyzes the commonalities in the scholarly and political vision of the two scholars, while stressing their indebtedness to a century-long critical, comparative ethnographic and historical expertise. Like Maine, Ehrlich too was profoundly critical of the effectiveness of the state legislation (Ehrlich 1967). Both of them regarded their respective administrations as epistemologically unfit to see the legal configuration of the society. But while Maine’s theoretical focus lay on the historical changes of property regimes, in Ehrlich’s sociology of law this receded to the background of his ‘living law’ guiding both urban and rural societies, aside the state. The module argues that it was this rootedness into a century-long critical legal tradition that made Ehrlich’s theory inspire conceptualizations of present legal pluralism both in the urban sphere of global trade, and in the post-colonial village communities of the Global South (Teubner, 1997; Zenker and Hoehne 2018).

References


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The Käte Hamburger Kolleg/Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/GCR21), in cooperation with the Institute for Work, Skills and Training (IAQ), and the Deutsches Institut für Interdisziplinäre Sozialpolitikforschung (DIFIS) at the University Duisburg-Essen, was official virtual organizer of the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE), 3-5 July 2021. The local organisation committee for the virtual sessions was comprised of Matthias Schuler and Tobias Schäfer (KHK/GCR21), in cooperation with Ute Klammer (IAQ und DIFIS). SASE is an interdisciplinary scholarly association with more than 1000 members from around the world, including disciplines such as economics, sociology, political economy, political science, organization studies, management, psychology, law and history. Beyond SASE’s interdisciplinary and international orientation, the Society shares with the KHK/GCR21 an ambition to examine economic and social behavior and its policy implications at many levels – for societies and institutions, locally, nationally and globally, as well as its ethical and normative implications.

At the conference, KHK Managing Director Sigrid Quack concluded her one-year presidency of the Society with a keynote address on The Pandemic as an Historical Conjuncture: Understanding Of the Present, Imaging the Future. She described the pandemic as a confluence of cross-cutting pressures for change, each unfolding with its own temporal dynamic in a relatively condensed period of time. The intersection of these cross-cutting historical processes accelerates the problematizing of existing institutions, generating a situation of high uncertainty that provides opportunities for broader shifts in direction. Yet, whether such opportunities are realized depends, she argued, on collective sense-making of the pandemic situation, shifts in policy paradigms and imaginations of alternative futures.

KHK researchers and fellows presented ongoing research at three jointly organized panel sessions. The panel session Imagining Pathways for Global Cooperation, chaired by fellow Malcom Campbell-Verduyn, included presentations by research group leaders Katja Freistein and Christine Unrau and associate fellows Maryam Deloffre and Bettina Mahlert on chapters of the forthcoming edited volume of the same title. By exploring performative effects of symbolic representations of future, present, and past forms of global cooperation, the papers in this panel evoked a lively debate on the role of imagination and reflexivity for contemporary global cooperation, broadly defined as cross-border collaboration among two or more parties addressing collective problems that are perceived to be of global scale, taking place within broader global governance architectures.

The panel session Polycentrism: How Governance Works Today, chaired by research group leader Nina Schneider, included presentations by Co-director Jan Aart Scholte and alumni fellows Fariborz Zelli, Jothish Rajah, and Alejandro Esquerra. This panel, composed of contributions from a forthcoming book project, provided an overview of the different perspectives to understand and initiate such exchanges, illustrates how to conduct them, and demonstrates their benefits for knowledge and practice. The panel provides an overview of different methods for understanding the new ways through which contemporary society is
governed. The in-depth conversation among the institutional, legal and relational perspective generated a lively exchange and debate with the panel participants, promising rich cross-fertilisations and creative innovations for future research.

At another panel on Digital Data Governance from a Polycentric Perspective: Policies, Practices and Technology, chaired by Co-director Jan Aart Scholte, fellows Carolina Aguerre, Malcolm Campbell-Verduyn, Nathalia Sautchuk-Patricio and Janet Xue presented works in progress from the Centre’s policy field global internet governance. The contributions explored challenges for governance that arise from the digitalisation of data. Zooming in on different technologies and principles – blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, and net neutrality – the papers explored the polycentric dimension of digital data governance, and particularly the roles of firms, civil society, and states. Interesting debates with the participants ensued about the different approaches/practices to digital data governance beyond data protection and the impact of new technologies such as AI and blockchain on existing data governance arrangements and conceptualizations.

Furthermore, fellow Malcom Campbell-Verduyn organized a panel on Covid-19 and International Political Economy – Same as It Never Was? The contributions to this panel injected nuance into how patterns of continuity and change in the regulation and governance of the international political economy are understood in regard to the consequences and attempts to resolve the volatile themes surrounding COVID-19 pandemic. Raising skepticism about the extent to which we can understand ‘this time as different’, contributions to this panel pointed to ways in which key changes in the regulation and governance of finance, labour, migration, and production must be situated within continuities preceding the initial shocks of the global pandemic.

The international conference, ‘Re-Imagining the Past’, organized by the Käte Hamburger Kolleg/ Centre for Global Cooperation Research (KHK/ GCR21) and the Centre for International Policy Studies (CIPS) of the University of Ottawa, took place on July 24–25th and focused on the process by which the past is retroactively charged with meaning. Re-imagining, in this context, does not merely stand for the representation of what belongs to the past. Rather, it is a cultural activity, which, as a lynchpin for a transformation of political order, is always also oriented towards the future. Over the two days, the conference brought together scholars from multiple disciplines, with different approaches and frameworks, from all across the world.

The first panel, called ‘Hypermasculine Representations and Female Protest’, dealt with protests led by women and the construction and representation of masculinity as well as the appropriation and reinterpretation of narratives by right-wing populists. The first two presentations were on women’s protests in Brazil and Poland. In the context of Poland, we can observe a new kind of solidarity, in that the protests are being supported by broad parts of the population from the countryside and the cities, and from diverse social groups. The feminist position against the stricter abortion law is increasingly becoming a movement directed against the government as a whole. The third presentation analysed the construction of masculinity in the case of Vladimir Putin in Russia. In the presentation, the speaker showed the different representations of masculinities and how Putin’s hypermasculinity is serving as a master-signifier for the construction of national identity as the population is too diverse in terms of religious or ethnic backgrounds to build an homogeneous identity. The fourth presentation dealt with how right-wing populists reinterpret narratives and the past and thus sell the past as the future. It is about the reinterpretation of historical events or figures that are appropriated for right-wing narratives, thus leading to a reinterpretation of history that fits the right-wing populist worldview and supports the constructed homogenous identity.

The second panel, entitled ‘Cultures and Coalitions of the New Right’, gathered specialists who discussed the concept of re-imagining the past in the context of the rise of right wing and populist movements. The United-States and Germany were cited as case studies wherein elements from the past are used by such groups to give righteousness and legitimacy to their cause, as well as to invoke an heroic or a victimized past. In Brazil, the impact of the Pentecostal Church in furthering discrimination towards minorities was also pointed out. Presenters then debunked the supposedly necessary return to a ‘human nature’ as claimed by right wing movements. Finally, the concept of the ‘fantasy shield’ as conceptualized by Norbert Elias to give to a ‘declining nation the strength to carry on’ (Elias 2008: 28–29) was shown as an insightful and relevant theory to comprehend the re-imagining of the past by right wing and populist groups.

In the third panel, presenters explored the topic of ‘National Politics of Remembrance’ as it relates to re-imaginations of the past. Employing concepts such as vicarious identification, vicarious resilience, and vicarious militarism, they analyzed the symbolical re-assertion of British militarized hierarchies of heroism in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. In a next
step, the question of what shape the formation of a collective memory on the War in Afghanistan might take in the wake of its conclusion was discussed, with a look at potential practices and artifacts of commemoration in the US and Germany. Finally, it was argued that imperial imaginations, particularly the motifs of decadence and decline, continue to be of great significance for the use historical narratives, especially in the context of politics.

The fourth panel, 'Transnational Politics of Remembrance', tackled the concept of re-imagining the past by first focusing on the concept of transnationality. By highlighting how indigenous spiritualities have recently been introduced to international law, it was argued that indigenous populations are now considered the 'guardians' of a 'natural' past, common to all. Presenters then turned to crises and war, where Europe’s foreign action in the 1990s was discussed. The topic of remembrance was then addressed, showing a discrepancy between how the War in Afghanistan is being remembered in the United States and in Germany. Finally, the premise that re-imagining the past might be harmful to society was countered by the argument that such practice can also be a useful for progressive social movement as shown by the arts and humanities. In that regard, the keynote from Aleida Assmann, Professor Emerita of British Literature and Literary Studies, from the University of Konstanz, was a fascinating addition to the conference. By reflecting on the different forms of time, whether it is linear or cyclical, the presenter showed how seemingly unique events are turned into a single narrative, in a liaison between the imaginary and the real. She discussed the different ways of, and reasons for forgetting the past, but also the purpose of remembering it. In fact, Aleida Assmann showed that politics of remembrance have a deeper meaning, a political purpose which carries a normative value: remembering memorials or anniversaries are here to pass on what shall be remembered. It is sometimes a rational decision but often, politics and sites of remembrance are a way to convey the symbolic and the emotional, as nothing disappears across time, especially not traumatic memory.

Under the title ‘Sites of Remembrance’, presenters in the final panel looked at the role played by the curation of public spaces – both material and virtual – for (trans-)national imaginations and re-imaginations of the past. Starting off with a reflection on the impact of the re-curation of the public sphere on social justice transformations exemplified by the so-called ‘Statue Wars’, presenters then showcased the significance of embodiment by highlighting how curators of museums and memorial sites attempt to choreograph the public’s bodily interactions with such spaces and thus elicit powerful emotional responses. Subsequently, the role of art institutions in the construction of national culture and historical imaginaries was illustrated by means of the example of the China Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2017. In a last step, the internet as a potential, but also highly politically contested virtual site of remembrance came into focus.

Overall, the conference was a very fruitful exchange and an interdisciplinary discussion around the topic of Re-Imagining the Past. The conference was rounded off by an artistic intervention by Eiko Grimberg with his visual essay Rückschaufehler. Starting from the Berlin Palace, which holds a great deal of historical significance, the artist deals with the paths of the original substance, the stones and ruins that were built up and taken down in the historic center of Berlin in the past century and shows the permanent ascription of meaning and overwriting of places. In relation to the conference, the essay reflected the topic of re-imagining and dealt with the coding and political instrumentalization of places and the resulting consequences.

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The paper analyses the role of social media in shifting the climate change discourse in the North Atlantic region. Changes in the media environment have removed traditional gatekeepers of information dissemination and empowered new kinds of actors to reach large audiences. Yet, the techniques and the particular messaging through which these audiences can be reached has had to change as well. Messages spread widely on social media if they get shared, liked, retweeted frequently. They need to provoke a reaction in their audience, that leads the audience to actively respond to the messages, be it only with a mouse click. Within the climate change field two new kinds of actors have the potential to seize upon this new opportunity structure: climate sceptics and pro-climate activist social movements. Through a qualitative social media analysis, this paper compares the specific messaging strategies these two communities have deployed.
Growing interest in the use of digital media by International Organizations (IOs) reflects recent development in those organizations: centralized public communication and organizations’ mandates calling for direct implementation of policies on the ground, as a growing number of private users and groups are engaging virtually with IOs. Social media discourse provides IOs with new output legitimation strategies. Those platforms directly or indirectly enable feedback from public sentiment. Platforms are also used to engage with stakeholders, thus circumventing official channels, especially when states are involved, by signalling their intentions, and by coordinating actions during campaigns, but also in crisis management.

The recently published volume on ‘Digital Diplomacy and International Organizations’, edited by Bjola and Zaiotti directly speaks to these issues. In their introduction the editors point towards a research bias in digital diplomacy studies, a field that has focused predominantly on the role social media has had in shaping national images and brands. They identify a ‘state-centrism of research on digital diplomacy’. International Relations-inspired literature on digital diplomacy started to develop an interest in IOs, as did organizational communication literature, wherein IOs can be conceived as semi-autonomous entities created to address specific global problems, operating in a setting (the international system) characterized by a lack of central authority.

Matthias Ecker-Ehrhardt takes the newly developed role of IOs in international public discourse as a starting point for his contribution to the volume: ‘IO Public Communication Going Digital? Understanding Social Media Adoption and Use in Times of Politicization’. ‘Politicization’ is a result of external contestation, organizational mandates, and a new degree of organisational control over public communication. The author adds that ‘the opening up of IOs towards civil society has fostered wide-reaching expectations regarding citizens’ direct participation in global governance’.

Ecker-Ehrhardt’s chapter is based on a large-N comparative analysis of social media presences on Facebook and Twitter. The sample of his analysis consists of 49 IOs’ social media activities between 2008 and 2018, subdivided into 290 constitutive units ‘to understand variation in their use of social media’. This resulted in 385 Facebook pages and 861 Twitter accounts. Rising levels of public awareness and contestation drives IOs to engage in strategic communication in order to manage legitimacy. In a global sphere of advocacy organizations, IOs find themselves in the new role of what Jens Steffek has called a ‘transmission belt’ for societal demands. Ecker-Ehrhardt looks at protest activities and scandals and the data show a positive correlation between protest activities (but not scandals) with the setup of social media channels in the following year. With regard to internal conditions of social media activities, more ambitious mandates positively correlate with social media activities. The expected number of social media presences increased almost fivefold, if IO bodies are tasked with the local implementation of programmes. A general impression of communications’ efficiency also proved valuable in this field. Central communication departments with established codified public communication correlate strongly with an intense use of social media channels. The author, however, did not find support for the idea that smaller organizations would make up ground by using social media: ‘According to this research, social media was most easily accommodated by the stronger and more professional actors, which falsify earlier hopes that social media may compensate for a lack of resources and contribute for bringing about a level playing field in global governance.’ (44)

This insightful analysis, in a highly interesting volume on the general topic of ‘Digital Diplomacy and International Organizations’ succeeds in establishing a thoughtful relationship between nine hypotheses derived from recent literature on the subject, and quantitative findings...
supporting those to a different degree. Ecker-Ehrhardt ends his contribution with a plea for process-tracing internal workflows, going beyond single case studies: 'Complementary evidence of comparative studies would help to come up with sound general conclusions about the role of digital communication in the current (and future) trajectories of global governance.' (45)

Maria Koinova's recently published monograph Diaspora Entrepreneurs and Contested States develops a novel understanding of diaspora entrepreneurs based on their linkages to de facto states and various global contexts. Koinova is interested in conflict-generated diasporas and how the affected people mobilize towards their countries of origin during experiences of contested sovereignty. Socio-spatial linkages, as they emerge in the process, can be understood as resulting from the pursuit of homeland-oriented goals through channels of interest. Koinova's empirical results come after years of research and close contact with diaspora entrepreneurs in the UK, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, and France. She distinguishes four types of entrepreneurs: The Broker (strong linkages: host-land, original homeland, global locations), the Local (strong linkage: host-land, weaker: original homeland, global locations), the Distant (strong linkage: original homeland, weaker: host-land, global locations), the Reserved (weaker linkages: host-land, original homeland, global locations).

In 2012–2017, she conducted more than 300 interviews in the UK, Sweden, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Armenia, Belgium, Kosovo, and Switzerland (ERC Project 'Diasporas and Contested Sovereignty'). Her study looks closely into conflict-generated diasporas linked to the de facto states (original homelands of) Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Palestine at different stages of recognition. In passing, this work also integrates the study of fragile statehood with that of migrants' incorporation and transnationalism.

The approach aims at a closer look into the interweaving of political environment and individual motivation under the condition of trans-locality. 'While the configurations of socio-spatial linkages are endogenous to the diaspora entrepreneurs, the PRE [politically relevant environment] factors are exogenous to them.' Koinova sees her typological theory as advancing both structural and dynamic elements.

Reviewing the literature, she points towards the need to overcome a dichotomous view of diasporas as either 'peace-makers' or 'peace-wreckers' by highlighting the hitherto neglected affiliations of actors to trans-national, global contexts.

Recent criticism has made it apparent that diasporas 'mobilize not simply in host-lands, but online, and in cities, refugee camps, supranational organizations, sites of global visibility, and spaces contiguous to or distant from the homeland'. But even in this new scholarly trend, 'a deep immersion in the individual dimension of diaspora entrepreneurs is missing' (10). Koinova's excellent study digs deeply in these fabrics. Her approach, theorizing diaspora individual agency from a socio-spatial perspective by prioritizing linkages to global contexts over personal characteristics, yields a surprising result: It is this individual dimension that finally unveils global inclinations.

Maria Koinova has written a very insightful book that provides a novel theorizing of agency in diasporas. By emphasizing linkages to global context over personal characteristics, the volume offers an innovative socio-spatial perspective that will be of interest to many readers in the field of global migration governance and diaspora studies.

Reviews: Martin Wolf
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